

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A method, comprising:

providing a substrate having a metal portion; and  
forming a metal capping layer on the metal portion, the metal capping layer comprising a group VIII metal and an element comprising at least Si, N, or C.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the group VIII metal is cobalt.
3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the metal capping layer further comprises a refractory metal.
4. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising forming the metal capping layer on the metal portion by applying an electroless plating solution to the metal portion of the substrate.
5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the electroless plating solution is applied to the metal portion for a time sufficient to form a metal capping layer having a thickness in the approximate range of 50 angstroms and 200 angstroms.
6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein forming a metal capping layer on a metal portion comprises forming a metal capping layer on a copper interconnect line.

7. (currently amended) A method comprising:

providing a substrate having a metal portion; and  
forming a metal capping layer on the metal portion, the metal capping layer comprising a group VIII metal; and

incorporating an element comprising at least Si, N, or C by a plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition treatment of the metal capping layer after forming the metal capping layer on the metal portion.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein Si is incorporated into the metal capping layer by the plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition of a silane.

9. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the metal portion is copper.

10-30. (canceled)

31. (new) The method of Claim 1, wherein the group VIII metal is alloyed with a group VIB metal.

32. (new) The method of Claim 1, wherein the group VIII metal is alloyed with a group VIIB metal.

33. (new) The method of Claim 1, wherein the metal capping layer further comprises boron.

34. (new) The method of Claim 1, wherein the metal capping layer further comprises phosphorous.